



1998-99 CATS ASSESSMENT

Open-Response Item Scoring Worksheet

Grade 4—Reading

Type of Passage: Literary

The **academic expectation** addressed by “Years Pass By” is

1.2 Students make sense of the variety of materials they read.

The **core content** assessed by this item includes

- Understand the meaning of a passage taken from texts recognized as appropriate for elementary school students.
- Describe the plot of a story.
- Explain a character’s actions based on the passage.
- Connect literature to real life.

Years Pass By

In order to live on the island, Robinson Crusoe had to learn many things.

- a. Describe THREE things he learned.
- b. Explain how each one helped him live on the island.

Use information from the story to support your answers.



SCORING GUIDE

Grade 4 Reading

Score	Description
4	Student clearly describes three things that Crusoe learned and clearly explains how each one helped him live. Response includes detailed information from the story.
3	Student adequately describes three things that Crusoe learned and adequately explains how each one helped him live. Response includes some information from the story. OR Student clearly describes two things that Crusoe learned and clearly explains how each one helped him live. Response includes detailed information from the story.
2	Student describes two or three things that Crusoe learned and provides a limited explanation of how each one helped him live. Response includes some information from the story. OR Student identifies one thing that Crusoe learned and adequately explains how it helped him live. OR Student identifies three things that Crusoe learned with little or no explanation of how each helped him live.
1	Student's response is minimal (e.g., student identifies one or more things that Crusoe learned).
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

Examples of things Crusoe learned:

- the different seasons on the island
- not to let the rainy season come without having put food aside
- that putting certain branches into the ground at the beginning of the rainy season would help form (grow) a tight fence
- how to carry his grain using handmade clay pots
- how to burn (bake) clay pots to make them hard

Examples of how the things that Crusoe learned helped him to live:

- learning the different seasons helped him learn when to plant grain for food
- learning to set aside food during the rainy season helped since he couldn't hunt
- having a fence allowed him to corral goats
- having clay pots helped him contain and store water and grain



READING PASSAGE

Grade 4

The following story is a chapter from the book Robinson Crusoe. Read to find out more about how Robinson Crusoe lived. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Years Pass By

One by one the years went by. Each year I learned more and more. I found that there was no summer or winter on this island. But there were rainy seasons and dry seasons. I learned not to plant my grain at the beginning of the dry season. I learned not to let the rainy season come upon me when I had no food put by, for I could not hunt in the rain.

I learned that if I put branches from one kind of tree into the ground at the start of the rainy season, they would grow and form a thick tight fence. I used these trees to make fences around the fields in which I kept my goats. I made myself a little house of these trees in the valley where the grapes grew. Sometimes I stayed there for two or three weeks at a time in the dry season. It was in that valley that I had my grain fields. The ground was rich, and the grain grew well.

I needed some baskets to carry my grain. As a boy, I had watched a basketmaker who used small branches from a willow tree. The trees I used to make my fence were very much like willows. So, one day, I cut some small branches from those trees and tried to make a basket from them. My baskets were not beautiful, but they were very useful. I

made plenty of baskets in the rainy season when I had to stay in my cave. But I could not make the baskets tight so that the small grain would not run out.

I found some clay and made pots which were smaller than the baskets. When they were dry I put one inside each basket. I put straw between the basket and the pot to keep it from breaking. The pots would hold my grain, but they would not hold water.

I needed something to carry water in and to cook in. Then one day I saw a broken piece of clay pot that had fallen into my fire. It was bright red and hard as a dish.

I said to myself, "Well, if they will burn hard like that when they are broken, I will see if I can burn one hard that is not broken." So I made some small pots. I placed a pile of wood around them and set the wood on fire. I kept the fire going for five or six hours and then let it die down slowly.

I could hardly wait till the pots were cool to try them. They were lumpy and thick, but they were as hard as could be.

"The Years Pass By," excerpt from Robinson Crusoe, as retold from Daniel Defoe by Edward W. Dolch, Marguerite P. Dolch, and Beulah F. Jackson. Copyright © 1958 by Edward W. Dolch, copyright © 1973 by Marguerite P. Dolch.



ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 4 Reading

Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

Student Response

a. He learned many things. He found out that he could make baskets from watching a basketmaker. He learned he could make bowls out of clay, and he learned (by accident) that he could make the clay hard by heating it for a long period of time.

b. The basket carried his food so he could hunt without having to carry his fruits individually but together. Still he could not put grains in it because it wasn't woven tight enough. So, he found clay and made a bowl that could hold grain, but couldn't hold water. Finally, after he found a broken piece of clay that was rock hard by the fire, he decided it melted then cooled to become that hard. He gets a bowl made out of clay, then heats it. It's actually hard when it cools and can hold water! I wish I were as smart as him!

← Student describes three things that Crusoe learned (i.e., that he could make baskets, that he could make bowls out of clay, and that he could make the clay hard by heating it).

← Student provides an in-depth explanation of how each thing that Crusoe learned helped him to live (i.e., the basket could carry his food so he could hunt, the clay bowl could hold grain that the loosely-woven baskets couldn't, and the baked bowl of clay could hold water). Response includes details from the passage.

Overall, the student demonstrates a solid understanding of the passage by describing three things that Crusoe learned and explaining in detail how they helped him live.



ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 4 Reading

Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

Student Response

While on the island, Robinson Crusoe learned quite a few things. He learned that he needed food stored for the rainy season. Robinson Crusoe learned that if he placed the branches of one type of tree in the ground at the beginning of the rainy season, they would grow into a tight fence. He also learned that his clay pots, after a few hours in the fire and a quick cool off, would become hard.

Knowing that he needed food stored for the rainy season helped Crusoe survive. Since he couldn't hunt in the rain, it was hard to get food in the rainy season. He needed food during this time. Crusoe also used the fact that at the beginning of the rainy season, a certain tree's branches could be put into the ground and would grow into a tight fence to keep alive. He used these fences to hold his goats which he used for food. He also built himself a house out of these branches. This house was closer to his grain. Finally, knowing that if he put his clay pots in the fire, they became hard helped Robinson Crusoe. He used the hard pots to carry water. Everyone, including Crusoe, needs water to live. Crusoe also used these pots for cooking. This made his food taste better. Besides, I doubt Crusoe enjoyed raw meat.

Student describes three things that Crusoe learned (i.e., that he needed to store food for the rainy season, how to grow a tight fence, how to make clay pots hard).

Student provides an in-depth explanation of how each thing that Crusoe learned helped him to live (i.e., he survived on stored food when he couldn't hunt, the fence held his goats, he used the clay pots to carry water and cook food). Response includes details from the passage.

Overall, the student demonstrates a solid understanding of the passage by describing three things Crusoe learned and explaining in detail how they helped him live.



ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 4 Reading

Sample 3-Point Response of Student Work

Student Response

He learned that a tree's branch can make a new tree if you plant it. Another one is he learned how to make a basket and the last thing is how to make a clay pot and to make it hard.

Those things can help make him survive because if you can plant a tree's branch and it will grow, you can build shelter or a fence to keep things out. If you know how to make a basket then that can help you survive because you can put food in it like apples, grapes so the food would not get dirty. The clay pot that he learned to make could of helped him survive because it can carry his water from the stream to his home. If you don't have water, you cannot live. So that is why you need those things to live.

Student describes three things that Crusoe learned (i.e., that a tree's branch can make a new tree if you plant it, how to make a basket, how to make a hard clay pot).

Student provides an adequate explanation of how each thing that Crusoe learned helped him to live (i.e., you can build a shelter or a fence to keep things out, you can put food in the baskets, the clay pot can carry water). Response includes some details from the passage.

Overall, the student demonstrates a general understanding of the passage by describing three things that Crusoe learned and adequately explaining how they helped him live.



ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 4 Reading

Sample 2-Point Response of Student Work

Student Response

He learned how to make fences, pots, and baskets. The fence helped him keep his goats in the field, and the pots and baskets helped him to carry grain and water to cook with.

← Student identifies, rather than describes, three things that Crusoe learned and provides limited explanation of how they helped him live.

Overall, the student demonstrates a limited understanding of the passage by listing three things Crusoe learned and providing limited explanation.

Sample 1-Point Response of Student Work

Student Response

He learned how to make baskets. He learned not to waste a lot. He learned not to litter. He made money selling baskets. He would save more food. He would not get taken to jail.

← Student attempts to list things that Crusoe learned. Only two are accurate (i.e., to make baskets and to save more food).

Overall, the student shows a minimal understanding of the passage. More supporting details from the story would have enabled this student to earn a higher score.



INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Grade 4 Reading

The open-response item “**Years Pass By**” was designed to assess how well fourth-graders can interpret literary material, in this case an excerpt from a chapter book about Robinson Crusoe. Students who were successful showed they could clearly understand the passage, describe what Crusoe learned that helped him survive, and use examples from the story to support their answer. The instructional strategies below present ideas for helping students explore and master these skills.

- The theme of survival, particularly one of “being a kid alone, courage and survival” is an engaging one for integrating a unit of short stories, chapter excerpts, or whole novels. (Some good books to use are *My Side of the Mountain*, *Sign of the Beaver*, *Hatchet*, *Devil’s Arithmetic*, and *Number the Stars*.) Students may self-select a book from a list of titles to read in small groups and keep journals focused on writing entries about what the main character is learning and how each lesson contributes to his or her survival. Working together, these small groups can provide feedback to one another on whether or not these journal entries contain the elaboration necessary to fully explain the importance of each lesson.
- Reproduce for students one of the sample 4-point student responses and the 3-point sample student response to “Years Pass By.” Tell the students that one of these responses received a higher score than the other. Have the students work in small groups, and ask them to evaluate each response, predict which one was graded higher, and to then list the reasons. Then have students read the “Years Pass By” excerpt. Give them either the 2-point sample student response or the 1-point sample student response and ask them to rewrite it, turning it into at least a 3, if not a 4.
- While “Years Pass By” is categorized as “literary” (i.e., a fictional passage from a novel), it is also a narrative full of interesting information. Challenge students to search the school’s and their own home libraries for novels, chapter books and picture books which are narratives (i.e., “stories” chronologically sequenced), but which also contain a lot of either historical or scientific information. Bring these into class and use them for a class discussion of the criteria a reader needs to use (e.g., Does it make sense? Does it fit what I already know?). Then in small groups, let students self-select one of these books for independent reading. In Independent Reading Logs, have students write responses to what they think they’ve learned about that content, and then support each statement with the text details that explain that particular bit of learning.